

Home Circle.

UNCLE LOU WRITES A LETTER.

BACHELOR'S HALL,

JUNE 26, 1895.

MY DEAR NIECE:—Your letter has been received and read with much interest. I am always happy to hear from you, and I know that you must be an excellent hand at driving away dull care. Your letters are always merry. That is right, my dear, make this world as happy as you can. You know we sometimes sing:—

"Go bury thy sorrow,
The world hath its share;
Go bury it deeply,
Go hide it with care."

I love to hear people sing that, but I love better to have them practice it. How mean, though, to spoil a good thing. They sang it at church last Sunday. Aunt Polly Dry leads sometimes, and she led that. Her face was so long that actually, one was wickedly inclined to wonder whether she couldn't crawl to heaven upon it. And the words dragged as though she was pulling them out of a mug of glue. It makes one feel terrible. Pshaw, I believe in people doing what they sing. Some ought never to sing anything else but hymns like the one commencing, "Hark! from the tomb a doleful knell."

You know, Mary, I never did believe in religion that had a "two-by-four" face. If the peace of God is ours, it ought to make us feel happy, and the face is the voice of the feelings. Who has a better right to the joys of life than the Christian? The gardens, the forests, the flowers, the birds, the laugh, the song,—won't a loving Father give to his children first?

But here is what surprised me, dear niece. You say you have an invitation to a dance, and would like to go; and you would like to know whether it is wrong or not? If you don't know whether it is right or wrong, *then don't go*. If it was all right, you would have no doubts. You say, "David used to dance." That's just like you young people. Well, I used to be that way. I argued that way, too. One day a brother, much opposed to dancing said to me, "Yes, and if you dance like David did, I will dance with you." "Well, how did David dance?" "David danced *before the Lord* with all his might." Then he would shout and sing unto the Lord as he danced. Now, you do that and there won't be any harm in it."

So, dear niece, if you will go to that dance and dance to the music of "Nearer My God to Thee," and "Jesus Lover of My Soul," you don't need to be afraid

to go. Go! I don't know how David did it, but some way I couldn't learn to dance to those tunes.

After all, dancing always seemed like a "hugging match" to me. And you know that your uncle always was quite private with such matters.

Again, I have never known any one yet to go home after a dance, read their Bible, and then ask God's blessing on their work. I don't know just exactly why some of our good dancing church members should not do this, but some how they don't. But then I have never found a church member, that any one cared about using for a *model*, at a dance. Nor did I ever see a *model* mother, or a *model* sister, or a *model* husband at a dance. In fact, I never saw anything model at a dance, except model fiddlers (not violinists,) model dudes, model flirts, and model devils. Did you?

Then, dear niece, let no silly amusement lead you astray. But that each act may call forth a blessing from men and from angels, is the wish of your affectionate,

UNCLE LOU.

"I DON'T HAVE TOO."

"I don't have to!"

The words were so quick and defiant, they came fairly bounding up the stairs and dashed into Aunt Meg's half-open door. It was not the first time during her week's visit that those words had rudely intruded themselves into the stillness of her room.

And yet Jack had not the least intention that Aunt Meg should know he talked that way. He thought she was the jolliest aunt and knew the nicest things, and in another minute he was knocking at her door.

"Aunt Meg, may I come in?"

How different his voice sounded!

"Yes, walk right in. Have you been home from school long?"

"No. But are you busy?"

"Only writing letters, and that can wait. What is it?"

"Some of us are going skating on the dam. Won't you come along? It'll be glorious fun."

"Yes, indeed, I want to go."

In a few minutes they started off, laughing and talking, and the lamps were lighted and supper on the table before they came back.

After supper, while mother was putting baby to bed, and father was out getting the evening mail, Aunt Meg looked up from her reading, and said:

"Jack, what don't you have to do? Just before we went skating there seemed to be something you did not have to do."

"Oh," said Jack, his face reddening, "Kate said I must wipe up the snow I brought in on my shoes before I went out."

He looked down wondering what she was going to say next. Her next words surprised him, so he quite forgot his embarrassment.

"Those words, 'I don't have to,' have helped me more than I can tell you for a great many years, Jack."

"Why, Aunt Meg; they're always coming out when I'm cross and in a hurry! And mother says they are ugly. I didn't suppose you'd ever say them, and I don't see how they could help you."

"Once in school I had a nice piece of candy, and two or three times I took a taste while the teacher was not looking, and once while she was looking, and I thought she was not."

Jack was all attention now. It was such a new idea to think of Aunt Meg doing just as boys and girls do now.

"But, instead of making me throw away my candy, my teacher merely looked straight at me, and said: 'It is a great temptation, I know, but you don't have to yield.' All the boys and girls looked around at me, and I felt very uncomfortable; but the words kept ringing in my ears: 'You don't have to yield.' And Jack, dear, so many times when I have wanted to do some pleasant but wrong thing, I have said to myself: 'Yes, it might be a pleasure to yield, but I don't have to.' And God has made me strong enough, and will make you strong enough, so that you won't have to yield either."

The room was very still; the creaking of mother's rocking-chair could be heard overhead, Jack's elbows were resting on the table, as he looked seriously at his aunt, and she went on:

"I wonder, Jack, if you ever noticed Christ's first temptation in the wilderness. He was hungry, and he could have turned the stones into bread, but he said he did not need to yield to his appetite; he did 'not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.' God's word tells God's will. And it is so with us. Many a thing would gratify us, but our life is a nobler, grander thing than pleasing ourselves; it is doing God's will."—S. S. Times.

NEARNESS of life to the Saviour will necessarily involve greatness of love to Him. As nearness of the sun increases the temperature of the various planets, so near and intimate communion with Jesus raises the heat of the soul's affections for Him.—Spurgeon.

It is a dangerous day for a Christian when he begins to think that he has more religion than his pastor.